

32745  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
RECORD COPY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Senior Research Staff on International Communism

THE PRESENT COMMUNIST CONTROVERSY:  
ITS RAMIFICATIONS AND POSSIBLE  
REPERCUSSIONS

CIA/SRS-2



15 July 1956

JOB NO. 80-01445R

BOX NO. 1

FOLDER NO. 2

TOTAL DOCS HEREIN 1

DOCUMENT NO. 1  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. 1  
☒ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ REVIEWER: \_\_\_\_\_

RECORD COPY

RETURN TO ARCHIVES & RECORDS CENTER  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER USE  
FOR 80-1045 BOX 1

211730

**WARNING**

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Senior Research Staff on International Communism

THE PRESENT COMMUNIST CONTROVERSY:  
ITS RAMIFICATIONS AND POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS

CIA/SRS-2

This is a speculative study which has been discussed with US Government intelligence officers but has not been formally coordinated. It is based on information available to SRS as of 15 July 1956.

\* \* \* \*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE PRESENT COMMUNIST CONTROVERSY:  
ITS RAMIFICATIONS AND POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS

1. The publication of Khrushchev's "secret" speech of 25 February created a strain, bearing certain appearances of a crisis, in the relationship of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) with the Communist parties of Europe and the United States. It accentuated prevailing tensions in at least some of the East European satellites. However, it does not seem to have affected Communist developments in Asia and Africa, judging from the few cautious reactions noted so far.

2. In the West, the controversy came into the open with questioning statements by the French CP, strong denunciations by Togliatti and Nenni, and somewhat milder criticism by the British and American CPs, all between 18 and 24 June. Some of the smaller European parties joined in the fray. Soviet failure to provide for publication of the speech by Communist organs, and the subsequent lack of an immediate explanatory follow-up unquestionably disconcerted western CP leaders and caused confusion among the rank and file of Party members and fellow

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

travelers. Nevertheless, the western scoop only brought to a head the restlessness which had vexed the parties ever since the 20th Congress of the CPSU and created a need to vent pent-up feelings.

3. In the satellite orbit, East German Party chief Ulbricht's criticism was the first to be heard. Subsequent press comments, while chiming in with Ulbricht, made it clear, however, that criticism was to remain within bounds. The Polish press published most of Togliatti's interview, without comment. A direct connection of the Poznan uprisings with the present Communist crisis probably cannot be established. Rather, the uprisings may have been the result of more liberal policies promised after the 20th Congress, just as the East German uprisings of 17 June 1953 followed the introduction of Malenkov's "new course". The Hungarian press quoted a few lines of the Togliatti statement. During the post 20th Congress period, ferment increased, more among the intelligentsia of Hungary than among the workers, who stood on the side lines and seemed inclined to let the Party leaders fight the issues among themselves. However, the Petöfi circle

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of young intellectuals is promoting critical discussions and, at least by implication, demanding that Nagy replace Rakosi. As far as is known, no other satellite government permitted publication of the Western Party criticism, even though leaders occasionally referred to it.

4. The Chinese Communist Party which reacted slowly to the theses of the 20th CPSU Congress and finally came out with a statement of restrained endorsement, has apparently not participated in the subsequent controversy. It merely printed parts of the Togliatti interview alongside the 30 June Resolution, without comment. The Japanese CP, too, has been reluctant to take sides. That Party's leadership is probably preoccupied by factional fights which have been going on for some time and have not as yet been resolved. The cautious and reluctant reaction of the Indonesian CP, which is trying to keep its peace with both Stalin and Khrushchev, is perhaps symptomatic of the state of mind of the Communist leadership in the uncommitted areas. Similarly, the Indian CP did not criticize Khrushchev severely, merely indicating that Stalin's merits should not be altogether forgotten and

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

that further explanations should be provided. The Resolution will probably furnish sufficient clarification, from the point of view of the Indian CP leadership, which is concerned lest the masses become even more confused than they already are. In general, Communist parties in the uncommitted areas may be so impressed with Soviet activities, profitable to them, that they will submerge the controversy over the "secret" speech and at least pretend to be content with the Resolution. We believe that the course charted by the 20th Congress will prove more appealing to the Communists in these areas than was rigid Stalinism. As more Party "autonomy" is stressed, native nationalism may gradually lose its fear of the USSR as a new source of potential foreign domination.

5. The principal points of criticism by the Western parties were the following:

a. The CPSU leaders have mishandled the publication of Khrushchev's "secret" speech of 25 February by permitting the bourgeois press to scoop the Communists and have compounded this error by not issuing an immediate explanation;

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b. The CPSU leaders cannot be absolved of all responsibility for Stalin's crimes; not having stopped him, they must share his guilt;

c. Past violations of "socialist legality" and the harm done to the International Communist Movement by the "cult of personality" cannot simply be accepted ex-post-facto; there must be guarantees that they will not occur again.

6. The principal inferences or conclusions drawn by Western Communist leaders in their criticism were:

a. The structure of World Communism may have changed;

b. The USSR has served as a model for building Socialist society, but the areas in which Communist rule is now established are so vast and varied that the Soviet model can no longer be mandatory.

c. In non-Communist parts of the world, there are countries where Socialism might be achieved by drawing together various socialist movements which have not yet reached a mutual understanding or agreement. This

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



means that freedom of action is required by the national CPs to work out their problems in accordance with prevailing conditions.

Criticism and inferences were similar everywhere, and no real independence of thought was displayed.

7. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU of 30 June, published by PRAVDA on 2 July, was issued to provide an answer to the Communist critics. Although the document was signed by the Central Committee, there is no evidence that a plenary meeting of the Committee actually took place. The document appears to have been hastily drafted; it is repetitive and apologetic. In the endeavor to exculpate themselves, the Soviet leaders modified their previous statements regarding Stalin's behavior during World War II. They now claimed that they had succeeded in "sharply restricting" the dictator during this period but they admitted that afterwards they were unable to do so. Being psychologically cornered, the Soviet leaders aggressively revealed their revolutionary intentions more bluntly than in the 20th Congress statements, and their interpretation of the Party line is

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

anything but mellow. The Resolution does not answer many pertinent questions raised by the criticism, nor does it deal sternly with the "rebels". It slightly slaps Togliatti's wrist but on the other hand quotes his positive statements, along with similar quotations from the CPs of China, France and the US, purporting to show that the fraternal parties throughout the world have approved of the new Soviet policies.

8. In order to dispel any impression among the Free World parties that the Soviet system had changed fundamentally, the CPSU emphasized again and again that the underlying principle of Communist strategy is and remains Marxism-Leninism. The paraphernalia of this ideology are unchanged: the Leninist principle of Party leadership (i. e. the dictatorship of the Party); the reinvigoration of "socialist democracy" (i. e. "democratic centralism", internally and externally); the use of cadres for the attainment of special targets (i. e. undercover activities); the continued interest in proletarian solidarity (i. e. central control of Communism in one form or another); and a more flexible method to achieve and maintain such solidarity (i. e. a tendency, for the time being, to retain

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

control without rigid organization such as the Comintern).

The Resolution (which falsely ascribes Stalin's thesis of building "socialism in one country" to Lenin) caters to former Stalinists as well as to those of Titoist leanings.

It officially restates its undying enmity toward the imperialist West in general and the US in particular. It clearly disposes of any hope concerning changes which might decrease the Communist threat. Rather it confirms the 20th Congress proclamation of a Communist Renaissance following the Stalinist Dark Age.

9. Such a Renaissance, in the view of the Soviet leaders, can only be achieved by recognizing that previous tactics have become obsolete and that new conditions and circumstances require new policies and methods. Among these circumstances the Soviet leaders include the following:

a. There is a nuclear stalemate, making resort to general war unprofitable;

b. There appears to be a chance that the polarization of power around the US and the USSR will give way to a variety of power combinations, and if this is the case,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the Sino-Soviet bloc will in time acquire superiority over the Western camp without having to resort to violence;

c. A new "polycentric" concept, i.e. a modified application of Leninist "democratic centralism" to International Communist organization, will promote world-wide United Fronts and lead to Socialist-Communist combinations, such as Tito has suggested.

10. It is unlikely that the CPSU can and will change its position for some time to come. It will permit the development of Party "independence" outside the orbit, well aware of the risks involved but almost certainly confident of its ability to maintain its predominance in World Communism. It should be understood that "autonomy" will be limited to local interpretations of Soviet policies. Even prior to the 20th Congress, the visit to Belgrade implicitly sanctioned greater freedom in the conduct of CP affairs. So far as the satellites are concerned, the Soviet leaders probably felt that Party autonomy could be confined to external manifestations without touching the substance of control, thereby preventing the emergence of genuine Titoism. They probably reasoned that, doctrinally, the People's Democracies have already chosen their road to socialism.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Moreover, the political and economic dependence of the satellites upon the USSR, which is about to be further strengthened by impending economic integration into the Soviet Bloc, guarantees, by and large, the loyalties of the leadership. Having an overriding vested interest in the continuation of a Soviet-Satellite union, and controlling their armed forces and the police, the satellite Communist leaders can be expected to prevent anti-regime resistance from creating more than occasional rioting. Serious tendencies toward Titoism could, if necessary, be curbed by Soviet armed forces. SRS believes that the Eastern Bloc is politically, economically, and militarily now so tightly knit that major deviations could and would not be tolerated by Soviet leaders. Occasional flareups of local independence, such as the Hungarian radio outburst of 3 July following Suslov's visit, will be treated as vents for national self-assertion but they will have little real meaning. In other words, there is no reason to believe that the satellites will not remain satellites.

11. The Soviet leaders probably foresaw difficulties with the Western powers when they launched the anti-Stalin campaign. But they may have looked upon Western Communist outbursts as tempests in the samovar which in time would calm themselves without harming

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the cause. They must have concluded that minor "revolts" of Western parties need not impede Soviet advance into the political vacuum of the uncommitted areas seething with powerful nationalist aspirations. There are indications that Asia and Africa are now the prime targets of Communism, taking precedence over stalemated Western Europe for the present.

12. The CPSU, with the help of the Central Committee's Resolution, will try to tighten the Party Line which had become somewhat diffused in the aftermath of the denunciation of Stalin. The CPSU leaders have embarked on a grand-scale tactical maneuver to overcome the obstacles in their way and to hasten the advent of a socialist society. In its bold conception, this tactic transcends that of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP). Basically, it uses the technique of decentralizing International Communism. The former Stalinist crime of "nationalist deviation" has now been declared a Leninist virtue.

13. In this connection there is evidence that Tito is still thinking of a world-wide Socialist-Communist combination, a "Fifth International", as it has been called. His interest in closer relations with Socialists has been developing ever since

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

his break with the Cominform, and the theses of the 20th Congress probably have given new impetus to an old idea. Tito may have discussed this idea with Togliatti in Belgrade and with the Soviet leaders during his visit to the USSR. It is conceivable that the Kremlin, far from objecting, in fact encouraged him to go ahead. It may have believed that such a combination would greatly stimulate United Front developments and would impress many "advanced" socialists in the uncommitted areas. However, this new "International" would differ from its predecessors, at least for the time being, in avoiding formal organization. Tito appears to envisage it as a loose association of leftists. Presumably he still is averse to becoming a member of a more formal organization, the control of which could pass into the hands of the USSR. Thus it may be assumed that, at the outset, the new "International" would center around Socialist and Communist groups of the Free World, notably from uncommitted areas, and that the USSR would not insist upon active participation or leadership. While the Soviet leaders may not be entirely happy about such a development, they probably believe that for the advancement of World Communism, Titoism is preferable to "reformist" socialism.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Moreover, the Soviet leaders probably expect that Socialists, by affiliating themselves with the new "International" would be more likely to break away from the influence of the Second International in general and the European Social Democrats in particular, which still is considerable.

14. The idea of the new "International" is not to be confounded with attempts on the part of Tito, which appear to be supported by the USSR, to create a neutralist "zone of peace". The implementation of this objective would greatly assist the USSR in its efforts to detach the Afro-Asian nations from Western influence and to substitute that of the USSR through political and economic manipulations. Evidently, both the creation of a neutralist combination of states and the establishment of a new Socialist-Communist "International" are viewed as supplementing each other. For the implementation of both plans, Tito may have been accorded a leading role as a mediator between the radical and moderate political groups, as a man who has demonstrated how to remain neutral even against heavy odds. But while the formal establishment of a neutralist

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~SECRET~~

bloc probably would meet with resistance on the part of leaders who seek to remain unattached to any type of political alignment, an informal "Fifth International" might win the sympathy of many leftists who desire a political position halfway between social democracy and Communism.

15. Although these developments may raise hopes that the deterioration of Communism is imminent, SRS does not believe that such hopes are justified. On the contrary, we feel that in the long run the danger of Communist encroachment is likely to increase rather than decrease. A determined, gradualist, and purposefully flexible Communist policy, not always recognizable as such, is difficult to combat with means at the disposal of a democratic country. In SRS-1 we speculated that:

"The post-Stalinist concept of Communist victory is the achievement of 'socialism' in individual countries in a manner suited to national conditions, followed by the joining of such countries in a loose community of 'socialist' states. At first, these states would retain their national identities but as time goes by they would gradually merge into a World-Communist community which would rule itself according to ideologically motivated universal laws, having discarded national governments as we know them today." (Para. 12).

Doctrinally, Communism will now differentiate "between that

which is universally valid in Marxism and that which is particularly applicable to one or another country". (Eugene Dennis in POLITICAL AFFAIRS, June 1956, p. 3). This approach would tend to avoid the narrow dogmatism of Stalin's era and might even go beyond Lenin's democratic centralism toward Tito's "polycentralism". Such a decentralization of World Communism would provide for a flexibility of maneuvering that could not easily be matched by the more cumbersome parliamentary machineries of the West. Barring vigorous and novel Western countermeasures, the Titoist gamble of the Soviet leaders appears to have good chances of success. We may find Communism greatly expanding and possibly confronting the West with an unfriendly world combination of Socialists and Communists. Such a combination might flourish in an atmosphere which the USSR deliberately kept free of international tension.

16. Nevertheless, there are risks for the Communists. Their long-range tactic of decentralization might lead to a loosening of discipline and to fractionalization, especially in Europe. Without monolithic isolation, Communism could lose

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

its spell, and might even be infected by evolutionary socialism. However, in our opinion, such a development is not likely to occur, unless the US and the West act vigorously to exploit prevailing Communist confusion, to counter the Soviet economic offensive effectively, and to undertake a more aggressive program for the conquest of man's mind. There is still considerable wishful thinking on the Western side. European and US newspapers have sensationalized Communist Party criticism; they have played down indications that the USSR still is the base of World Communism and that Communist Parties remain dependent upon Soviet ideological guidance, financial help, and organizational leadership.

17. We conclude that the present crisis, if in fact it is one, is not a grave danger for world communism. We see no convincing reason to assume that the USSR has lost its ability to control the Communist movement. We believe that the CPSU leaders, when they launched the campaign against Stalin, probably expected manifestations of discontent. Nevertheless, they were willing to relax their absolute control

of the Western parties, at least temporarily, in the belief that they could re-establish Soviet hegemony at will. We further believe that the Resolution will suffice as an "explanation", even though many questions remained unanswered, as the CPUSA and Togliatti have already pointed out. The Western Communist leaders will probably not press for further elaboration. As parish priests, they will interpret the Soviet encyclicals in accordance with their own needs, without resorting to the Moscow high priests. The line for such additional interpretation probably has been communicated to those European leaders (all members of the Cominform) who reportedly congregated in Moscow at the time the Resolution was published. We believe that the USSR's main concern will be the exploitation of Communism in Asia and Africa. In this area, it probably will proceed cautiously, dealing with national governments rather than with Party officials, in pursuit of its economic offensive. Overtly, it will be circumspect, avoiding "interference in the internal affairs" of other countries. Covertly, it will press toward the formation of United Fronts and other Socialist-Communist combinations. Where their parties are

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

outlawed, Communists will join socialist groups, thereby gaining and maintaining Communist influence in any new political combinations. If intra-Communist squabbles should continue or increase, it is possible that a tougher Party line may be adopted. The CPSU Resolution and current PRAVDA interpretations provide the theoretical tools for such a toughening within the framework of Khrushchev's "new course".

\* \* \*

Approved For Release 1999/09/08 : CIA-RDP80-01445R000100020001-5

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

**RECORD COPY**

Approved For Release 1999/09/08 : CIA-RDP80-01445R000100020001-5

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~